

## **WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**DATE: MAY 28, 2009**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR  
BELDEN  
CHAMPAGNE  
MERLINO  
SOKOL  
PITKIN

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR STEC

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

PATRICIA TATICH, DIRECTOR

WAYNE LAMOTHE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

REPRESENTING WARREN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CORPORATION:

LEONARD FOSBROOK, PRESIDENT

JENNIFER SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE/EMPIRE ZONE  
SPECIALIST

JOHN DAVIDSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE WARREN COUNTY EDC  
BOARD

JEFF BYRNE, ORDA BOARD MEMBER

HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL  
SERVICES

JOANN MCKINSTRY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE  
AND FISCAL SERVICES

JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

NICOLE LIVINGSTON, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISOR THOMAS

CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Planning & Community Development Committee to order at 10:48 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Tatich, Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, who distributed copies of the agenda packet to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda packet is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Tatich began the agenda review with the pending items and stated that the first pending item pertained to the status of discussions with the Adirondack Community Housing Trust (ACHT) for possible future collaborations. She advised that there was nothing to report on this item and it should remain on the pending item list.

Ms. Tatich said that the second pending item pertained to the vacancies on the Warren County Planning Board. She added that there continued to be a vacant position from the Town of Queensbury, which would remain on the pending item list. She requested to appoint Paul Golhofer to the Warren County Planning Board, effective June 19, 2009 and terminating

December 31, 2010 to represent the Town of Bolton.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to appoint Paul Golhofer to the Warren County Planning Board, effective June 19, 2009 and terminating December 31, 2010. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Tatich noted that the third pending item pertained to rescinding Resolution No. 89 of 2009 and amending Resolution No. 695 of 2008, both of which pertained to the Quadricentennial. She explained that the County Attorney's Office had an issue with the wording of the contract. She said that they were attempting to acquire a more specific contract from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, noted that the wording for the resolution needed to match that of the contract. Ms. Tatich said that at this point they were awaiting the final contract.

Wayne LaMothe, Assistant Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, apprised the Committee that the last pending item pertained to a request to enter into a contract with the North Creek Railway Depot for improvements to the Owens House Museum, which had been presented at the previous meeting. He said that the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor (FWHC) Grant Program would fund the cost of the renovations to the building, which would be used as an interpretive and educational center. He added that the North Creek Railway Depot owned the Owens House Museum and would provide any required matching funds. He stated that an agreement was required that would allow the County to purchase the necessary materials and install a heating system. Mr. Belden asked who would complete the renovations and Mr. LaMothe replied that it would be done by the contractor. Mr. Sokol asked if the Owens House Museum was County property and Mr. LaMothe replied in the negative and added that it was part of the train station complex that was owned by the Railroad Preservation Depot Association. Mr. Pitkin asked if there would be any cost to the County and Mr. LaMothe replied in the negative.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Pitkin and carried by majority vote to authorize a contract with the North Creek Railway Depot, owners of the Owens House Museum, to make the necessary repairs and upgrades to the Museum building, with Mr. Merlino voting in opposition. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the June 19, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Tatich requested a transfer of funds in the amount of \$6,250 from the RESTORE-Administrative-Office Supplies Code (CD67 8686 410) to the RESTORE-Loans & Grants-Contract Code (CD67 8668 470) to correct a previous error. Mr. LaMothe noted that when the original fund had been created he had made an error by allocating additional monies to administration.

Motion was made by Mr. Champagne, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request for transfer of funds as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Tatich stated that the next item on the agenda was to update the Committee on the status of the Broadband Study. She advised that the County would join with Hamilton County to

complete a needs assessment study and design to be completed by CBN Connect. She said that she and Mr. Thomas had been appointed to the CBN Connect Advisory Council and last week they had attended a meeting in Lake Placid, New York where they had been introduced to the Chairman of the CBN Connect Board. She added that some of the topics of discussion had included the Telemedicine Information Network, timelines for completion of the project and opportunities for project assistance. She said that the Advisory Council had been pleased that Warren and Hamilton Counties had joined them in their efforts. She explained that Warren and Hamilton Counties had been tasked with identifying business and agency support as requested by Congressman Scott Murphy concerning appropriations and stimulus funding for project design. She noted that the Department would commence with identifying businesses that would be willing to send letters of support. Mr. Thomas advised that it was necessary to show need and support of the project in order to qualify for available funding. Mr. Belden asked if each Town should send a resolution of support for the project and Mr. Thomas responded that it would assist their efforts. Mr. Belden asked if Washington County would join in the study and Ms. Tatich responded that Washington County was still considering the study. Mr. Pitkin noted that it would cost Warren County an additional \$10,000 to \$20,000 if Washington County did not join in the study. Mr. Geraghty apprised the Committee that he, Mr. Strainer and Chairman Monroe had met with Congressman Murphy last week and added that the Congressman was receptive to the concept of a broadband study. He noted that the Congressman seemed detail oriented and added that they had displayed a map that detailed the lack of broadband service in this area.

Ms. Tatich stated that the next item on the agenda was to discuss which position within the Department would be abolished. She noted that there was limited redundancy in the duties of the Planning & Community Development Department, which has had the same seven positions since 1982. She said that her strategy in identifying which position to abolish had been to compare which positions had opportunities for revenue enhancement and the generation of future funding. She reviewed the positions which had been under consideration and stated that they had identified the GIS (Geographic Information System) Coordinator position for abolishment.

Ms. Tatich explained that the GIS System had come to the Department in 1986 and they had hired their first professional GIS employee in the early 1990's. She said that the GIS Coordinator installed the necessary updates to the software and resolved issues with the system and provided GIS services to the County, as well as the individual Towns. Mr. LaMothe noted that the service at the County involved maintaining the database for parcel information generated from the Real Property Tax Services Office and merging the data with the assessment rolls, aerial imagery and census information to be used as an analytical tool for redistricting efforts, reapportionment efforts and supporting information for submission of grant applications. He added that the information was also utilized by the District Attorney's (DA) Office in court proceedings and was used to maintain and supply additional E911 addresses. He further added that a T1 line feed had been provided to the Department of Public Works (DPW) Shop in Warrensburg, New York. He advised that the services provided to the individual Towns included the assessors using the information to maintain their rolls in the NYS ORPS (New York State Office of Real Property Services) format. He added that the GIS Coordinator had to go to the Towns on a regular basis to deliver the updates on a compact disk, as the size of the information was too large to send electronically. He noted that the Planning & Community Development Department did not receive revenue from the individual Towns for

the GIS services which were provided. Ms. Tatich stated that the GIS Coordinator had added 245 E911 addresses last year for the northern part of the County, which had taken 345 hours or approximately 45 work days to accomplish. She added that after reviewing the staff she believed that the Associate Planner could assume the E911 responsibilities.

Ms. Tatich reiterated that the GIS Coordinator visited the individual Towns and the City of Glens Falls on a regular basis to update their systems. She added that the Town of Queensbury was the exception, as they had their own GIS employee. She said that the Towns would still require service and they could either pay the County to continue providing services or they could contract with a private entity. She advised that they had identified the GIS Coordinator position for abolishment; however, she added, prior to abolishing the position she suggested that the Towns be asked if they would be willing to fund the position to continue this service. She apprised that she had spoken to Kate Hogan, District Attorney (DA), and Ms. Hogan had stated that she would be willing to contribute \$5,000 to \$7,000 from the DA Office budget in order to fund the position. Mr. Champagne acknowledged that the Town of Queensbury did have their own GIS employee; however, he added, he would support the concept of the individual Towns contributing to fund the continuation of the GIS Program in the Planning & Community Development Department.

Mr. Merlino stated that when the Board had passed the resolution to abolish 24 positions within the County, he was unsure if it was mandatory or a request to see if it could be accomplished. He added that he did not feel the Planning & Community Development Department could afford to lose any employees. He said that a few months ago he had attended an Adirondack Park Agency (APA) meeting and a question pertaining to GIS had arisen and a comment had been made that they should call Warren County who had the best GIS Program in New York State. He suggested that if the DA's Office contributed \$5,000 to \$7,000 and the individual Towns contributed approximately \$1,000 per year, the Department might be able to retain the GIS Coordinator position on a part-time basis.

Mr. Belden asked what the base salary was for the GIS Coordinator position and Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, replied that it was \$58,298. Mr. Pitkin advised that he had spoken with Mr. Tessier, who had suggested that the Board should request each Department Head to reduce their budget by 10% and allow the Department Heads to determine where their budgets could be reduced. He added that if the Department Heads were unable to reduce their budget by 10%, the next step would be to evaluate the costs of non-mandated programs. Mr. Sokol noted that he had a similar conversation with Mr. Tessier several years ago, only at that time they had discussed 3 to 4% reductions. He asked what the result of a 3% budget reduction would be and Mr. Belden replied approximately \$1.8 million and added that the amount of reduction had to be at least 10% in order to cover the County's shortfall of \$6.3 million.

Ms. Tatich apprised the Committee that the original plan for the GIS was to establish the system and then extend the program to the Towns and the County. She noted that at some point the plan had been to reclassify the GIS Coordinator position to that of a GIS Technician, which would have a base salary similar to that of an Associate Planner. She advised that the GIS services could be a good test to determine if the individual Towns were willing to pay for the service. Mr. Taylor asked if Ms. Tatich had been able to estimate the potential revenue if the individual Towns were charged a fee for the service. Ms. Tatich said she had inquired with

the County Planning Director for Ontario County, which was similar in size to Warren County, and had been informed that their GIS Coordinator allotted a certain amount of hours to each Town per year and charged the Towns a fee of \$50.25 per hour. Mr. Pitkin stated that if the individual Towns were billed a fee for the service that would merely shift the financial burden from the County to the Towns.

Ms. Tatich said that quite a bit of time was spent on reviewing applications from the referrals received from the Warren County Planning Board. She added that time was spent visiting the sites of the projects, preparing and mailing the packets, attending meetings and completing the filing. Mr. LaMothe said that each project from the Warren County Planning Board cost the Department \$55.19 and 97% of the projects were referred back to the Town Planning Boards. Ms. Tatich explained that if the GIS Coordinator position was abolished there were other employees who could absorb the majority of the duties; however, she added, other projects or activities and the amount of time spent on Warren County Planning Board projects would need to be reduced or eliminated.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried by majority vote to abolish the position of GIS Coordinator, base salary of \$58,298 and refer same to the Personnel Committee, with Mr. Merlino voting in opposition.

Ms. Tatich stated that there were some duties of the GIS Coordinator that pertained to software that could not be completed by another employee in the Department. Mr. Taylor noted that Ms. Tatich had indicated that they would be able to handle the E911 Program. Mr. LaMothe responded that was correct as long as the system did not crash and added that if the system crashed, the Department would need to contract out for service. He further added that only a person familiar with the GIS Systems would be able to maintain the system. Mr. Taylor asked how often the system crashed and Mr. LaMothe replied that the system had crashed last month and added that most of the time they were not informed of a problem with the system because the GIS Coordinator fixed the issues as they arose. Mr. Sokol asked if the GIS employee from the Town of Queensbury could fix the system and Mr. LaMothe replied that it was possible.

Mr. Champagne suggested that a rate be determined and set for a service fee to the Towns and letters be issued informing them of the fee to determine if they were willing to pay for the service. Ms. Tatich said if enough of the Towns were willing to pay a fee for the service she could fill the position on a part-time basis. Mr. Champagne suggested that the position be abolished and a position of GIS Technician should be created with a base salary of approximately \$30,000. He added that if the base salary was approximately \$30,000 they should be able to collect enough fees from the individual Towns to add to the \$5,000 to \$7,000 from the DA's Office. Mr. Belden suggested that Ms. Tatich send letters to the individual Towns and the Department Heads to determine how much they would be willing to contribute in order to maintain the GIS Program. He added that the Board would need a determination prior to the June 19, 2009 Board meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Len Fosbrook, President of the Warren County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), who distributed copies of the agenda; *a copy of the agenda*

*is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Fosbrook requested to rotate the Committee meeting schedule that listed which Department presented to the Committee first, in order to ensure that the EDC was given equal time and consideration by the Committee.

Mr. Fosbrook stated that a copy of the study of Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport, which had been prepared for the EDC by R.A. Wiedemann & Associates, Inc. last year, to assist the County in their decisions pertaining to a Fixed Based Operator and an Airport Manager, had been included in the agenda packet. He added that one of the proposal options included in the study had been privatizing the Airport and he reported that Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, had requested that he provide copies of the study for the Committee meeting, as well as the Public Works (Airport) Committee meeting that would be held later today. He advised that this was the second study that had been prepared by R.A. Wiedemann & Associates, Inc. and added that the first study had generated the concept of land leases and had initiated the County's relationship with Schermerhorn Aviation for construction of the T-hangars.

Jennifer Switzer, Director of Finance/Empire Zone Specialist for the EDC, noted that the second item on the agenda was to present a recap of the EDC Annual Luncheon. She advised that 275 people had signed up for the Luncheon and 260 people had attended, which was the highest attendance they had ever experienced. She added that the sponsorship had increased by approximately \$1,500 and she noted that a list of people who had attended the Luncheon was included in the agenda packet. She said that the Annual Luncheon had been successful and they had started to plan their fall event.

Mr. Fosbrook stated that a new company called Aeon Nexus had recently located on Glen Street in Glens Falls. He said that Aeon Nexus were specialists in reducing costs and supplies for private companies and government entities. He noted that there was a handout included in the agenda which highlighted what Aeon Nexus did, as well as a listing of some of their clients. He advised that Aeon Nexus reduced the costs for companies and government entities through a process known as reverse auctions. He apprised the Committee that Aeon Nexus had offered to work with Warren County and was interested in giving a presentation to the Finance Committee. He added that Aeon Nexus did not charge an up-front fee, they were paid a percentage of the amount of money that they saved their clients. Mr. Pitkin suggested that they inquire with the County Attorney's Office to ensure the legality of using the company and Mr. Fosbrook responded that they could check with the County Attorney; however, he added, Aeon Nexus worked with other government entities including the Federal Government, the Department of the Army and the Office of Naval Research.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize Aeon Nexus to give a presentation on reverse auctions to the Finance Committee at the June 10, 2009 meeting.

Mr. Belden requested that Mr. Fosbrook attend the Finance Committee meeting as well and Mr. Fosbrook agreed. Mr. Taylor said that he had discussed the County's budget goals with Mr. Fosbrook and the creation of new jobs in Warren County initiated through the EDC.

Mr. Fosbrook noted that the EDC had prepared a document entitled, Voices of Warren County,

which had been included in the agenda packet. He said that he had prepared the document to give the County an idea of what some of the businesses and projects had said pertaining to their EDC membership. He stated that the Budget Committee had proposed reducing the EDC's budget from \$340,000 to \$250,000, a reduction of \$90,000. He added that the Town of Queensbury had reduced the EDC's budget by 30% from \$128,000 to \$100,000 and New York State had issued notification that the \$30,000 which had previously been allotted to the Warren County EDC for management of the Empire Zone would not be available for 2010. He said that at this point the EDC's budget had been reduced by more than \$150,000, or approximately 30%. He explained that the EDC normally operated with five employees and had lost one employee through attrition who would not be replaced. He advised that the areas that were easiest to reduce in the EDC's budget were consulting, engineering and marketing. Referring to marketing that had been done for Warren County, Mr. Fosbrook stated that the EDC Annual Report had won Best in Class at the State Economic Development Council meeting and added that the Queensbury Business Park Brochure had also won Best in Class.

Mr. Fosbrook advised that the EDC had an annual contract with Warren County to administer the Empire Zone for \$45,000. He said that if the contract was renewed at the same amount and the County reduced the EDC's budget by \$70,000, as opposed to \$90,000, he felt the EDC would be able to stay viable. He said that the goal of the EDC was to become financially independent but they had not yet achieved that goal. Mr. Payne stated that the County had not yet reviewed which contracts would be renewed and the final decisions would be made by June 10, 2009. Mr. Belden asked if the \$45,000 for the Empire Zone was separate from the amount that was contributed to the EDC budget and Mr. Fosbrook replied affirmatively.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried by majority vote to reduce the EDC budget from \$340,000 to \$270,000, a reduction of \$70,000, as opposed to the previously suggested reduction of \$90,000 and to refer same to the Finance Committee, with Mr. Champagne voting in opposition.

Mr. Fosbrook reported on the NYSEDC (New York State Economic Development Council) Annual Conference that had been attended by John Wheatley, Project Manager for the Queensbury Industrial Park. He said that the key note speaker's message had been that the future was local, connected and smart. He advised that Warren County's medical device cluster was strong although, Angio Dynamics was looking to relocate their headquarters farther south. He advised that the reason Warren County had a strong medical device cluster was because they had a trained manufacturing workforce.

Mr. Fosbrook noted that there was an Upstate Regional Blueprint for Growth Initiative, that was an upstate New York funding program for \$20 million which had been previously eliminated. He said that program provided investments for businesses, infrastructure and downtown redevelopment. He said that the program involved low interest subsidized loans or grants and advised that the EDC was looking to apply this program to the developer who bought the old Armory on Warren Street in the City of Glens Falls.

Mr. Fosbrook stated that the EDC financially supported the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI) and they were in favor of its location on the campus of Adirondack Community College (ACC). He added that the EDC no longer had the funds to continue to finance the ARBI. Mr. Taylor said that the general consensus was to pay the minimum amount

in order for the ARBI to remain viable. Ms. Switzer stated that the basic accounting and necessary insurance would cost approximately \$500 per year. Mr. Champagne questioned what the purpose of the \$500 was and Ms. Switzer responded that it would maintain the 501C3 and pay the cost of the insurance.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Pitkin and carried unanimously to cover the cost of basic accounting and insurance of approximately \$500 per year to ensure that the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator remained viable and to refer same to the Finance Committee for consideration.

John Davidson, Chairman of the EDC Board, thanked the Supervisors who had attended the Warren County EDC's Annual Luncheon. He said that it was encouraging to the local businesses to know that they had political support. He stated that he appreciated the Committee listening to the EDC's budget concerns.

There being no further business to come before the Planning & Community Development Committee, on motion by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Merlino, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist